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being enormous. Over 200 variants are noted at the foot. A good idea of what the tablet was like when completed can be obtained now, the text being printed lengthwise, though the scale is, of course, much larger than that of the original.

Plates 45-47 (the old 52-54) contain proclamations and letters, and they show decided improvements. Nos. 2 and 3 on pl. 45, all three texts on plate 46, and Nos. 1 and 4 on pl. 47 are reproduced in the original Babylonian character, and are not transcribed into the Assyrian. The letter of Sennacherib (No. 3 on pl. 47) is probably the most interesting.

Plate 53 (the old 60) has a considerable number of improvements and corrections, and a small addition in col. II. The obv. and rev. are now put in their right position, and the long and interesting colophon has been restored.

In plate 61 (the old 68), the "oracle to Esarhaddon," no duplicate has been found to complete the text, but many lines have been greatly improved by a careful collation, as cols. III., IV. and VI. testify, and many minor improvements have been made. The last two plates, 62 and 63 (the old 69 and 70) give the great syllabary found by George Smith. In all, there are more than 10,000 lines of inscription in the book.

I would simply add in conclusion that the new edition is the work of Mr. Pinches. It seems to be the policy of the Trustees of the British Museum to do more publishing than heretofore. This is seen from the appearance of this volume by Mr. Pinches, the Catalogue (in two parts at present) of the Kouyunjik Collections by Dr. Bezold—noticed by me in the Oct.-Jan. number of *HEBRAICA*—and the *Tel-el-Amarna Tablets*, by Drs. Bezold and Budge. The present policy of the Trustees is, of course, specially gratifying to all Assyriologists.

ROBERT FRANCIS HARPER.

London, May 2d, 1892.

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## ASSYRIAN AND BABYLONIAN LETTERS BELONGING TO THE K. COLLECTION OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

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The historical inscriptions of Assyria and Babylonia have been, for the most part, carefully studied and translated. The more important texts hitherto published have been collated and fresh translations made by competent scholars during the last decade. No one can hope to add much to semitic science historically, or linguistically, by continuing to work over the old material. There are not a few passages in these inscriptions in which there is still uncertainty and others that are wholly obscure. The obscurities are mainly etymological and lexical and the aid necessary to their elucidation can be found only in new historical texts yet to be discovered, or, to a limited extent, in other branches of its copious literature, still imperfectly examined or wholly unknown. Assyriology in the future, more than in the past, must depend upon itself for its interpretation without, however, disdaining valuable suggestions yet to be received from Hebrew

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\* ASSYRIAN AND BABYLONIAN LETTERS BELONGING TO THE K. COLLECTION OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM, by Robert Francis Harper, of The University of Chicago.—Part I. The University of Chicago Press. *Luzac and Co.*, London. *D. C. Heath and Co.*, Chicago. 1892.

and Aramaic, Arabic and Syriac, and even from some of the more remotely connected branches of this widespread family of languages. Assyrian possesses a vast deal of material for its exposition in the thousands of unpublished texts in the British Museum and in the other collections in Europe and the United States. But the past lines of advance are not the future lines of progress. The time for the publication of "Miscellaneous Texts" is past. There is a call for students to devote themselves to special "series" dealing with particular subjects. Not even vocabularies and syllabaries can safely be taken at random and applied without discrimination to texts generally. Many of them were evidently intended for the explanation of special works. The meanings attached have application only within the bounds of the subject for which they are prepared. It is well known that even in modern languages words which are the same orthographically and genetically connote, by the special uses to which they have been applied, quite divergent and sometimes even antithetic ideas. This occurred much more frequently in ancient languages than in modern. Facility in the formation of special terms was not a characteristic of early languages. The main vocabulary was levied upon for the best it could offer to do duty in their stead, and these words were, so to speak, compelled to connote certain ideas in accordance with the character of the subject treated. This fact must not be lost sight of by Assyriologists, for, great as is the temptation to overlook it, the confusion consequent upon the oversight may be greater. This is not the place to discuss this subject. We call attention to it here in connection with the work under review. Not only must Assyriology depend more largely upon itself, but, further, each department of its literature must be studied exhaustively and, to a certain extent, independently. Astrological and astronomical works cannot be explained except in their own light. Mythological, ceremonial and religious texts derive little aid from contract tablets. Epistolary correspondence cannot be successfully made out by depending upon the historical vocabulary. Each class, if it is to be studied profoundly and scientifically, demands separate and exhaustive examination. It is with pleasure, therefore, that we welcome this work by Dr. Harper. If Assyrian letters are to be read this is the way to do it. The author informs us in the preface that it is his purpose (which we hope will be effected), "1) to publish *all* the letters in the *K.* collection in which the name of the scribe is to be found; 2) the best preserved and most important of those without signatures; 3) a transliteration and either a tentative translation or a résumé of the contents. . . . together with a glossary. . . . in other words, to give a corpus epistolarum of the *K.* collection." The task which the author sets himself is not an easy one (as the collection numbers several hundred), but even a cursory reading of the letters of this volume is sufficient to show that in this exhaustive handling of the subject many difficulties, textual, grammatical and lexical, otherwise incapable of solution, will be found to be self-explanatory.

The study of these letters in the past has been somewhat desultory. Mr. George Smith first drew attention to them and attempted the translation of a few of them. Mr. Pinches next called attention to them in the *Transactions of the Society of Bib. Archaeology* (vol. 6, p. 219) and gave a translation of *K.* 14. He was followed by Mr. S. A. Smith, who published with translations thirty in the II. and III. Pts. of his edition of *Asurbanipal*, and about as many more, together with a few from other collections, in the *Proceedings of the Society of Bib. Archaeology*. He admits, in several instances, that his work is imperfect, and that he is

not sure that he has grasped the subject of the letter. Pater Strassmaier has given numerous extracts in his *Verzeichniss der Assyrischen und Akkadischen Wörter*, etc., and several complete texts have appeared in the *Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*. The most careful study they have received has been by Prof. Frederick Delitzsch. The results of his work have been published in *Beiträge zur Assyriologie*.

The texts contained in the above publications are in the main from well preserved tablets. Some of the tablets copied in the present volume are fragmentary. These, however, throw light upon others. K. 1272 e. g. contains only the usual introductory formula and mention of the scribe as a citizen of Nineveh, a fact not stated elsewhere in his correspondence. Similarly K. 1428 is a joint-document from the four scribes who wrote the first fifty letters, thus showing that they were contemporaries. These fragments are often difficult to read. Others in this collection are difficult because of the imperfect state of preservation. A practiced eye is necessary and a general knowledge of literary forms indispensable.

Of the one hundred and twenty-four in this volume about four-fifths are published for the first time. The work will contain about six hundred when completed.

The arrangement of the letters according to the name of the scribe will prove quite convenient, as it will facilitate a comparison of all those emanating from the same source. This arrangement is the more important as the name of the king (to whom the greater number are addressed) is not given. The introductory formula, which is somewhat stereotyped, runs, usually: "To the king, my lord, thy servant." Following this is the name of the scribe with the salutation: "May there be peace to the king, my lord, may Nebo and Merodach be gracious to the king, my lord." The formula varies according to the supposed importance of the occasion. In the sixth letter "all the great gods of heaven and earth, those that inhabit the land of Assyria and those that inhabit the land of Chaldea, all the gods of the lands" are invoked. A similar invocation is found in the seventh and fifty-fourth. The latter is addressed to the king's daughter, and the scribe mentions several gods and goddesses to whom, he says, he prays daily for the health and prosperity of the princess and king. He closes with the wish that Bel and Nebo may turn toward him the friendly faces of the king and princess. Some of the scribes, almost regularly, omit the invocation, e. g., Tābu-šil-šarra and Tim-ašur. During the period of this correspondence the worship of Nebo and Merodach was most prominent.

The author has done his work carefully and well. To insure, if possible, a more correct text the majority of his copies were submitted to Mr. Pinches for collation. In difficult texts, however, it is almost impossible to secure accuracy at every point. We have collated twenty-five of these letters and have found very few instances where we would venture a different reading. The following corrections are submitted: p. 21, last line, read *bul* for *ád* (cf. l. 2, p. 22); p. 40, l. 16, read *bab*, *kur* for *nu*; p. 44, l. 5, beginning, read *í*, in the middle read *tu* for *la*; l. 11, there is nothing wanting after *am*; l. 19, read *at*; p. 50, l. 12, *lu* is, perhaps, to be supplied at the end as S. A. Smith did at the suggestion of Pater Strassmaier; p. 88, l. 5, rev. read *hi-i-ti-šu* after *ša*; l. 11, there are traces before *šu*; l. 12, read *ma-a kaspu* before *šêbila*; p. 89, l. 5 is omitted, read *ana šarri bêlija*; lines 10 and 11, at the beginning are traces of three and two

wedges respectively; Rev. l. 12, read *tur* for the sign after *ša*. In Index II., p. xiv, Col. I., last line, read 43, 44 for "113, 114." In all the instances where the author has differed from his predecessors his readings are preferable.

The University of Chicago Press is to be congratulated on the general appearance and typographical execution of this book, the first to bear its imprimatur, and, especially, because its first work is a pledge of its interest in scientific study. The book is an 8vo of 116 pages containing letters from *nineteen* scribes on various state and local, mercantile, religious and private affairs. The work promises to be an important addition to Assyrian literature.

J. A. CRAIG.

LONDON, Nov. 4th, 1892.